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ABSTRACT

The language program at the United State Air Force Academy is described with emphasis on its upper track courses that are designed to prepare area specialists to interact with their foreign counterparts. Air Force officers assigned to Latin America, for example, may serve as experts in political-military affairs, foreign military sales, or as staff officers handling Latin American issues at U.S. Southern Command Headquarters or at the Pentagon. This paper describes the Spanish component of the Latin American Area Specialist Program, which is designed primarily for students majoring in history, political science, or geography with a specialization in Latin America. It is available to students with other majors whose primary interest is to improve their language skills while studying the target culture. The language component of the program consists of two tracks of four courses beyond the basic or intermediate level of Spanish. The upper division track, which is emphasized in this paper, is designed around a concept of culture developed by anthropologist Leslie White and involves four major components of culture: ideology, institutions, attitudes, and technology. The upper level language curriculum consists of four courses covering Latin American culture, culture and civilization, Spanish literature, and research and stylistics. Contains 9 references. (LB)

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Teaching Spanish to Latin American Area Specialists At the Air Force Academy: A Focus on Language and Culture

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United States Air Force Academy

Paper presented at the EMU Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions
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In foreign languages, the LSP (language for specific purposes) movement responds to the urgent need to educate Americans in applied foreign languages, to equip them with cultural knowledge useful in understanding, appreciating, and interacting successfully with foreign counterparts, and to help Americans become sensitive to the existence and validity of different perspectives on life and global issues. (Grosse and Voght, 1990, 36)

This is perhaps nowhere more applicable than in an institution preparing its graduates for a global mission. Such is the case with the United States Air Force Academy. The mission of the USAF Academy (USAFA) is

> to provide instruction and experience to all cadets so that they graduate with the knowledge, character and motivation essential to leadership as career officers in the United States Air Force. (USAFA Mission statement)

The language program at the USAF Academy is designed to complement this mission. Specifically, courses in the upper track are designed to prepare area specialists who will be able to interact with their foreign counterparts in providing for the security of the United States and its allies. Language-qualified graduates of USAFA can at some time during their military career expect to

> fill sensitive positions as military attaches at our various embassies, as liaison and exchange officers, as joint staff officers in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and at Supreme Headquarter Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium, as staff officers in Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), and as intelligence analysts almost anywhere. (USAFA Curriculum Handbook, 1991-1992)

Air Force officers assigned to Latin America may also serve as experts in political-military affairs, foreign military sales, or as staff officers handling Latin American issues at US Southern Command Headquarters (SOUTHCOM) or at the Pentagon. To meet

these requirments effectively, a basis in understanding the culture of Latin America is of prime importance.

It is interesting to note that efforts to integrate foreign languages into the curriculum turn to anthropology as "the discipline with the most impact on what and how we teach." (Jurasek, 1988, 53) This happens to be the case also in the upper level courses at USAFA.

In this paper, I will describe the Spanish component of the Latin American Area Specialist Program at the Air Force Academy. The program is designed primarily for students majoring in History, Political Science, or Geography with a specialization in Latin America. It is available to students with other majors whose primary interest is to improve their language skills while studying the target culture. Hence, the focus at USAFA is to increase communicative competence through a focus on language and culture.

The language component of the program at USAFA consists of two tracks of four courses beyond the basic or intermediate level of Spanish. The lower track begins with the completion of the core language requirement and ends with the first advanced course, a capstone skills course, which equips the students to score at a level of 1+ or better on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. The upper track begins with the capstone skills course and, after three language enhancement courses, equips the student to score at an ACTFL level of 2 or higher. It is the upper division track that this paper will describe.

The upper division track is designed around a concept of culture developed by anthropologist Leslie A. White (1959). Specifically, it involves four major components of culture: ideology, institutions, attitudes, and technology.[1] This approach views culture from a global perspective that involves: the study of dominant ideologies or belief systems; the study of institutions founded on these ideologies; attitudes which subjects of the target culture develop and express in language and art as they cope with the demands of their institutions, and the technology they develop or adapt to improve their standard of living. The objective of this approach is to gain an appreciation of the culture of Latin America with the language skills that equip a Latin American area specialist to deal effectively with his or her counterparts in any variety of positions to which an Air Force officer might be assigned in Latin America or with responsibilities that require a knowledge about Latin America.

The Cultural Components

The first cultural component that forms a basis for our upper level courses in Spanish is that of ideology or, more broadly speaking, a worldview, a frame of reference, in short, a belief system. More precisely, one can define ideology as "a consistent, shared perception of reality in order to sustain a common course of social action." (Nash, Corradi, and Spalding, 1977, 111-112) Thus, "beliefs" in White's construct become important as the basis for action. They are important because they form the basis for the institutional (or sociological) component of culture, i.e., "the customs, institutions, rules and

patterns of interpersonal behavior." (White, 1959, 6) Given these institutions and traditions, man develops attitudes in interacting with these institutions - attitudes of support for, identification with, or defense from the impositions of these institutions. These attitudes may be expressed in literature or art or in customs and patterns of behavior which may themselves define a subculture. Finally, a specific cultural group will incorporate a certain degree of technology (tool use) that will enable it to perpetuate and to improve the life of its group members within the institutions it has developed. Hence, culture for White is "an extrasomatic (non-biological) mechanism employed by a particular animal species in order to make its life secure and contiguous." (White, 1959, 8) If this is the case for man universally, how does it reveal itself in the particular case of Latin America? That is the question our upper level Spanish courses are designed to answer.

The Upper Level Language Curriculum

The upper level language curriculum consists of four courses: Spanish 321, which doubles as a capstone skills course and an introduction to Latin American culture; Spanish 365, which is our culture and civilization course; Spanish 376, which is a course on Spanish literature[2]; and Spanish 491, which is our research and stylistics course. Since Spanish 321 is our capstone skills course, students who demonstrate linguistic competence through our placement/validation exam and an interview with the Spanish 321 course director can validate this course. In this case, to complete the four courses required for a minor in

Spanish they would have to take an independent studies course, Spanish 499, or, as of spring 1992, a second literature course focused on Latin American literature.

The four components of culture - ideological, institutional, attitudinal, and technological - are treated in these four courses in the following manner. In Spanish 321, we provide a general overview of the four cultural components which are subsequently explored in depth in our other courses. Specifically, we use the text Tradición y Cambio by Daly Heyck and Gonzalez-Widel[3] which traces both the traditional roots of Latin American culture and contemporary pressures for change. The text is supplemented by videos that highlight and complement the lessons of the readings.

On the ideological component of culture, we examine those belief systems that have an impact on the vital institutions of the state, the military, the church, the school, and the family. Hence, we look at how authoritarianism and corporatism affect the state; how caudillismo and caciquismo affect the military; how catholicism, african cults, and indigenous beliefs provide a rich syncretism that affects the church in various ways from the Caribbean to the Andes; how the Catholic Church and the state along with the humanist and positivist traditions affect education; and, finally, how the primacy of the patriarch affects the family as the social unit which renders support to the immediate and extended family but at the same time imposes in, certain circumstances, paternalistic tendencies.

Just as ideologies, frames of reference, or belief systems impact on institutions, so do attitudes. Hence, in the case of the state, the attitudes of resistance on the part of the populace to unresponsive and repressive regimes sometimes leads to revolutions - as occurred in Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia. In the case of the military, the attitude that they are the "guardians of order" or that they can do a better job in bringing about economic development than their civilian counterparts sometimes leads to coups d'etat. In the case of the church, the attitudes that the church has a social as well as spiritual role leads to the selection of an "option for the poor," the creation of "comunidades de base," and the promulgation of a theology of liberation that seeks to bring about social justice. In the case of the schools, the attitudes that education, beginning with literacy, needs to be promoted has led to literacy campaigns based on a traditional humanities model as promoted by Mexico's José Vasconcelos or a social activist model by Brasilian Paolo Freire, whose campaign of consciousness raising served as models for the literacy campaigns in Castro's Cuba and the Sandinistas' Nicaragua. In the case of the family, the attitude that family members are an important resource in securing one's needs becomes evident in the place of the extenced family and the practices of personalismo, cuatismo, and compadrazgo.

As for the place of technology, it is evident that Latin America has been in many ways dependent on foreign technology for its own development. The dependence on the British for railroads,

on the British and Americans for petroleum extraction, and on several multinational companies for investment in mining and industry has contributed to a Latin America where the harshest indictment in terms of technology is that "la diosa tecnología no habla español" (the goddess of technology speaks no Spanish).[4]

All of these components of culture in the Spanish course are treated thematically by discussions of readings that appear in Tradición y Cambio. Additionally, videos that portray Latin American leaders, such as Juan Perón or Augusto Pinochet, that record coups d'etat such as those in Haiti, or that depict Latin American problems such as urbanization and migration, complement the readings. Finally, we use invited guests - officers from the allied air forces of Argentina and Mexico who are assigned at USAFA - as well as officers and cadets who visit our academy via the Cadet Exchange Program. Presently, we have exchanges with the academies of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Spain and we are also visited by representatives from the Colombian Air Force Academy. When officers and cadets from these academies are here, we invite them to our classes in order for them to converse in Spanish with our cadets. The ratio on these occasions is typically one foreign cadet to four of ours, which quadruples the ratio of instructor to student for the purposes of practicing conversation.

Whereas the Spanish 321 course serves as but a thematic introduction to the cultural components of the diverse cultures of Latin America, our Spanish 365 course takes a more systematic and chronological approach. This course thus treats in greater

detail the pre-columbian civilizations, the history of the discovery and the conquest, the institutions of importance during the colonial period as well as the attitudes of important thinkers such as Garcilaso de la Vega and Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz. It continues with the period of independence inspired by the ideologies of liberalism spawned by the French and American revolutions. It traces also the literary movements that accompany the transition to the 20th century and culminates with a discussion of current events in the fields of government, economics, education, and literature and the arts. Once again, then, attention is paid to the ideologies, institutions, attitudes and (within the framework of a discussion on economics) the place of technology in Latin American culture.

The present course on literature focuses the students' attention on the hispanic roots of Latin American culture as reflected in the development of the Spanish literary experience. While the course does focus on the techniques and styles of the historical development of Spanish literature, it also calls attention to the attitudes, values and beliefs expressed by the characters as they are given particular form by the various authors. The readings selected point out the importance of the Roman Catholic Church as an institution whose beliefs form the basis of an informed conscience. In the diverse selected readings attention is drawn to attitudes and values that define or circumscribe Spanish culture. The discussion on the Cantar de mío Cid, for example, draws attention to the attitude of rebellion against arbitrary rules, the attitude of dignity in the

face of adversity, the value of individualism in the context of defense of one's honor, and the tension between practical realism and noble idealism. Hence, the readings are treated not only for their artistic quality, but for the insights they can provide into Spanish culture.

We are presently developing a course on Latin American literature that, we hope, will capture the flavor of the diversity of Latin American culture in its various national manifestations. We plan to select readings that reflect the attitudes of the individual as he deals with the ideological and institutional legacies that serve as the backdrop which surround his personal dilemmas. Such classics as Ricardo Güiraldes' Don Segundo Sombra, Rómulo Gallegos' Doña Bárbara, Mariano Azuela's Los de Abajo, and José María Arguedas' Ríos Profundos will serve as cornerstones for our exploration of the Latin American experience. Of particular interest to our cadets, we think, will be the theme of civil-military relations treated by Mario Vargas Llosa in La ciudad y los perros.

Having taken either the Spanish or the Latin American literature course, the students will complete their studies in the upper level track with Spanish 491, our stylistics/research course. In this course, students are again dealing formally with skills development - specifically, writing skills. But the topics they choose to write about for their final papers are typically topics that delve into some aspect of Latin American culture. Some recent examples include the reasons for the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, the role of the middle class in the

Cuban revolution, the claims of the disappeared in Chile, and the attempts to transition toward democracy in Mexico. The students are expected to defend their thesis before a group of Spanish instructors at the end of the semester.

Expectations

The program of study just described is intended to immerse the student in Latin American culture as he polishes his linguistic and communicative competence. The strong sociocultural component is intended to prepare the student for further work as a Latin American area specialist. These courses complement other coursework in political science, history, economics and geography that focus on Latin America. The students that take our courses also do well in area studies courses that deal with Latin American topics from an interdisciplinary perspective. We believe that an approach that provides a cultural focus as the student develops his language skills is an approach that motivates the students, responds to their needs for area expertise and builds a foundation for future success in coping with issues that involve the Latin American culture area.[5]

NOTES

1. For this conceptual framework for defining culture I rely heavily on Leslie A. White, The Evolution of Culture: The Development of Civilization to the Fall of Rome, New York: McGraw Hill Book Co,, Inc., 1959.

2. We are presently building a course on Latin American literature which will support our Latin America area emphasis.

3. This text is favorably reviewed by Susan A. Cavallo in Hispania 73, September 1990, 678.

4. See Eduardo Galeano, "La diosa tecnología no habla español." In Denis Lynn Daly Heyck and Maria Victoria Gonzalez-Widel, Tradición y Cambio. New York, Random House, 1988, 360-364. The article is a segment from Galeano's Las venas abiertas de américa latina, which has been translated into English by Cedric Belfrage under the title Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973.

5. On the relevance of motivation to success in the context of language for specific purpose, see Dana Strand, "French for Field Work: A Specific-Purpose Language Course," The French Review, Vol. LVII, No. 5, April 1984, 669-674.

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Spanish 321: Quickview Syllabus Spring 91, Block I

Rec	Objective/Function	Content	Accuracy	Vocab	Text/Asgn/Misc	LC	OP	Reading	Comp	Culture	Quiz/Exam
1	Introduction Block I IH My family/Instructor	Course content			Assignments from avanzando	Son #1					
2	Personal Identification: My family IL	Who am I? Who will I be?	Description following study guide format	Read Block I, Rec. No. 1	Accent Rules Page 4 Ex: I,II, page 6	TV	ST	T y C pp. 2-5		Geografía y Clima	
3	Oral Presentation IL	Friends, Family	Block I Format	Vocab. Util	Present Indicative Page 19 Ex: IV, Page 24		ST	T y C pp. 6-9		Civ. Indígena	
4	Personal Written Identification Students IL	Job, Profession	Block I Format	Vocab. Util	Reflexive verbs Page 126 Ex: I, II, Page 128	TV	ST				
5	Student's Presentaton IL	Oral Presentation	Block I Format		Past and Imperfect Pages 26 and 33 Ex: IV, V, Pages 36, 37		ST	T y C pp.9-15		La epoca colonial	
6	Student's Discussion IL	Discussion			Future, conditional Page 43 Ex: V, VI, Page 47	TV	ST	T y C pp. 15-18		Ind. y crisis	
7	Invited guest: Spain IH	Government Religion Economy	Understand Facts Details						WC #1		
8	Song and Interpretation IM			From T y C	Past Participle Page 48 Ex: I, p. 49	S #2		T y C pp. 18-22		Aut. y Rev.	
9	Skits based on Aut y Rev IM			From T y C	Present Perfect Page 50 Ex: I, page 52	TV	ST	T y C pp. 28-33		Las clases sociales	
10	Skits based on social classes IM			From T y C	SER and ESTAR Page 54 Ex: III, IV, Pg. 87		ST	T y C pp. 72-77		La Etnicidad	
11	Skits based on La Etnicidad IM				Present and past Pages 19, 26 Ex: V, Page 25		ST				
12	Prepare for WC #2	Urbanization				TV		T y C pp. 116 - 121	WC #2		
13	Review/Prepare GRI				Future, Conditional p. 43; Ex: VIII, p. 48	TV		T y C 121-125			
14	GR I										

	Subject/Function	Content	Accuracy	Vocab	Text/Asgn/Misc	LC	OP	Reading	Comp	Culture	Quiz/Exam
Block II - Los Cambios = Leer y Discutir											
15	Intro to Block II Review GR I	Urbanization	Understand Facts Details	Read Block II	Imperfect Pages 126, 133 Ex: VI, Page 38				Song # 3		
16	IM	Family			Subjunctive: Present, Page 62 Ex: II, Page 65		ST	T y C pp. 160 -166			
17	Read Prepare IM	Education	Understand Facts Details	Page 83 Text	Subjunctive Pres. p. 62 Ex: IV, p. 66-67		ST	T y C pp. 207 -214			
18	Invited guest: Argentina IH	Government Religion Economy	Understand Facts Details								
19	Read Prepare IM	Religion	Understand Facts Details	Page 68 Text	Subjunctive: Imperfect, Page 67 Ex: III, Page 69		ST	T y C pp. 257 -263			
20	IM		Understand Facts Details	Page 80 Text	Subjunctive: Phrases Page 80: 1 thru 5 Ex: V, Page 85		ST		WC #3		
21	Pick Topics for Final Paper	Culture Latin America Authors Issues			Subjunctive: Ex: IX & X, p. 87			SR 1 Mig 21		Song #4	
22	Student Presentation IM	Interests/ Aircraft	Describe Activities/ Preferences	Page 90 Text	Imperative Page 89: 1,2,3,4,5 Ex: IV, V, Page 93		ST	SR 2 F-7M			
23	Student Presentation IM	Interests/ Aircraft	Describe Activities/ Preferences				ST	SR 3 Kfir			
24	Student Presentation IM	Interests/ Aircraft	Describe Activities/ Preferences		Subjunctive present, imperfect Pages 62, 67 Ex: III, Pg. 66, II, Pg. 68		ST	SR 4 E 2C/ E3A			
25	Student Presentation	Interests/ Aircraft	Describe Activities/ Preferences			TV	ST	News- papers	WC #4		
26	Review for GR-2	Tradición y cambio topics	Discuss			TV	ST	T y C pp. 312 -315		La Cri- tica Cul- tural	
27	GR-2										

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Rec	Objective/Function	Content	Accuracy	Vocab	Text/Asgn/Misc	LC	OP	Reading	Comp	Culture	Quiz/Exam
28	Intro to Block III Review GR-2 Discussion IH	Tradición y cambio topics	Discuss	Read Block III			ST	T y C pp. 321 - 329		La Identidad Nacional	
29	Invited Guest Mexico IH	Government Religion Economy	Understand Facts Details								
30	Discussion IM	Tradición y cambio topics	Discuss		POR y PARA Pg. 180-184 Ex: I, Page 184	TV	ST	T y C pp. 332 -337		El machismo	
31	Discussion IM	Tradición y cambio topics	Discuss	Texts pp. 156-161	Adjective: Page 157: 1,5,6,7 Ex: II,III, Pg. 162		ST	T y C pp. 347 -353		El militar	
32						TV		T y C pp. 360 -364		El desarrollo económico	
33	Oral Presentations IH	Culture, Authors, Issues Latin America	Communicate Facts Details	Page 164 Text	Comparative Page 163: 1,2 Ex: I, Page 167 Ex: III, Page 168		ST				
34	Oral Presentations IH		Communicate Facts Details	Page 167 Text	Superlative Page 166: 1,2 Ex: IV, p. 166-169		ST				
35	Oral Presentations IH		Communicate Facts Details		Gerund Page 111-113 Ex: I, II, p. 113		ST				
36	Oral Presentations IH		Communicate Facts Details		Ex: I,II, page 113		ST		WC # 5		
37	Oral Presentations IH		Communicate Facts Details				ST				
38	Oral Presentations IH		Communicate Facts Details				ST				
39	Oral Presentations IH		Communicate Facts Details				ST				
40	General Review and comments IH	Written composition due				TV					
41	IH	Written Composition (due alternate)			Review for Final	TV			Song #6		
42	IH	Written Composition			Review for Final	TV			Song #7		